

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus for the composting of material ~~which includes~~ comprising a container ~~which has with~~ an openable lid which closes with respect to its surrounding perimeter by means of a resilient seal so as to provide a substantially airtight closure with the container, across the bottom of the container being a series of supply conduits which have a plurality of holes passing through the walls thereof which are ~~collectively fed~~ connected to a single exiting return conduit which ~~feeds into~~ is further connected to a pump and ~~through a filter back and further connected to an extraction conduit, whereby when the pump operates air is drawn from upper regions of the container into [[a]] the extraction conduit and forced out of the supply conduits to flow through the material being composted, wherein the aqueous liquids formed during treatment are held at a level lower than that of the supply conduits, by a combination of a sump below the supply conduits and floor means to hold the material being treated above the sump, the floor means having one or more apertures disposed thereon, to allow liquid to pass therethrough and into the sump, wherein the apparatus further comprises a pump means to pump the liquid from the sump area and to disperse the liquid over the top of the material to be composted.~~

2. (cancelled)

3. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, ~~in that~~ wherein the floor means is sloping.

4. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the ~~plurality of one or~~ more apertures disposed on floor means are located at a lowermost point to allow liquid to pass through and into the sump.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 ~~further characterized in that,~~ wherein there are means with which to access the liquid in the sump from ~~the outside the~~ container.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~as claimed in of~~ claim 1 ~~further characterized in that,~~ wherein there are a number of chambers in connection with the lowermost regions of the container for isolation of the liquid material produced.

8. (currently amended) A method of treating materials to be composted ~~which includes comprising~~ the steps of containing such materials within the closed container as described in claim 1, then effecting a first covering of woodchips then successively a layer of organic material to be composted and a layer of absorbing woodchips, pumping air into the container at one part of the contained body of material, and taking the air having passed through the material from the container so that it, and it only, will be substantially recirculated back to an introduction location of the material so that gaseous products of any decomposition of the materials will be kept within the container or its connected conduits, the liquid formed as a result of the ~~compositing~~ composting passing through the floor means and held at a level lower than that of the supply conduits; and
extracting the collected liquid from the lower most level and reintroducing it into the top of the container.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the collected liquid is extracted from the lower most level and reintroduced in to the top of the container.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[9]]~~ 8, wherein the extraction of liquid and reintroduction to the top of the container is effected from time to time through the period of composting.

11. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the liquid is collected and held for a period of time to encourage bacteria growth.

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method of treating materials to be composted as in claim 8 further characterised in that,~~ wherein the recirculation of air is effected from time to time through the period of composting.

14. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method of treating materials to be composted as in claim 8 further characterised in that,~~ wherein the recirculation of the air and gases is through a biofilter in the pathway of such recirculating gases.

15. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method of treating materials to be composted as in claim 14 further characterised in that,~~ wherein the biofilter includes compost or similar organic material through which the air to be filtered is passed.

16. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method of composting as in claim 8,~~ wherein the layer of organic material to be composted is a layer of bodies.

17. (currently amended) A method of composting materials as in claim 8, ~~which are~~ wherein the material is high in protein content including and the method includes the steps of holding the composting materials in a closed container and recycling through the material substantially only the air and any resultant gases given off from the composting materials.

18. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method as in of claim 17 further characterised in that 8, wherein~~ there are provided means to effect a cyclic operation of ~~[[a]] the~~ pump so that it can be switched on and switched off over a decomposing period according to a pre-arranged program.

19. (currently amended) A method of composting which includes the steps of placing the materials to be composted into a substantially airtight container, sealing the container and then blowing in a recycling manner substantially only the air and gases contained within the container through the composting materials by providing a supply conduit having a plurality of holes, whereby when the pump operates air is drawn from upper regions of the container into an extraction conduit and forced out of the supply conduit to flow through the material being composted for a period of time to collect and distribute ammonia sufficient to allow for a substantial buildup in concentration to a pathogen killing level of ammonia derived from the composting materials, maintaining such circulation for a sufficient period of time so as to effect a substantial pathogen kill in the composting material, and then collecting the liquid produced during the composting from a chamber positioned below the level of the material, and pumping the collected liquid from the chamber and dispersing the liquid over the top of the material.

20. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The method as in of claim 19 further characterised in~~
~~that 8, wherein~~ the composting materials are placed in layers with materials separating the
respective layers, which are porous.

21. (canceled)

22. (new) The method of claim 19, further comprising:
providing the container with an openable lid which closes with respect to its surrounding
perimeter by means of a resilient seal so as to provide a substantially airtight closure with the
container; and

connecting the supply conduit to a pump and a filter, whereby when the pump operates air
is drawn from the upper regions of the container into the extraction conduit and forced out of the
supply conduit to flow through the material.